

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /058 W
-----091959Z 099962 /63

R 091755Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4475
INFO AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 7554

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT,PINT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN PARTIES EXAMINE STATE OF PLAY

REF: ROME 7367

SUMMARY: LAST WEEK'S BILATERAL PARTY NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD ARE BEING FOLLOWED THIS WEEK BY MEETINGS AT THE PARTY EXPERT LEVEL. THIS WILL PERMIT THE MAJOR PARTIES (CPI, PSI AND POSSIBLY THE DC) TO EXAMINE THE STATE OF PLAY AT MEETINGS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DIRECTORATES (THE CPI, IN ADDITION, HAS CONVENED A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON MAY 12). POLITICAL REACTION TO LAST WEEK'S MEETINGS HAS BEEN CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC -- SIGNIFICANTLY ALL SIDES AGREE THAT A BASIS FOR AN AGREEMENT EXISTS EVEN IF POSITIONS (PARTICULARLY OVER POLITICAL ASPECTS) ARE REPORTEDLY STILL FAR APART ON MOST ISSUES. THE DC IS ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE ITS MEMBERS AND ELECTORATE THAT A "COURAGEOUS DIALOG" WITH THE PCI IS NEEDED SINCE "AN ERA IS OVER," WHILE STAUNCHLY INSISTING IT CANNOT ENTER INTO A POLITICAL AGREEMENT WITH THE PCI. THE PCI SIMILARLY SEEMS TO BE PREPARING ITS BASE TO ACCEPT
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SOMETHING LESS THAN ITS MAXIMALIST POSITIONS BY TOUTING THE HISTORIC, POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIRECT DC-PCI NEGOTIATIONS. BESET BY NEW, INTERNAL SQUABBLING, THE PSI IS EMBARRASSINGLY PRESSURING THE CPI TO KEEP UP ITS DEMANDS FOR THE "WIDEST POSSIBLE POLITICAL CHANGES." END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER THE FIRST ROUND OF BILATERAL PARTY NEGOTIATIONS (MAY 5-6) AIMED AT REACHING A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD ON MAJOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES, PARTY SPOKESMEN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE WEEKEND TO TAKE STOCK OF THE SITUATION. THEIR REACTIONS HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUS AND RESERVED. THE PARTIES SEEM AS RIGID AND FAR APART AS EVER ON THE THORNY QUESTION OF ALTERING THE PRESENT, PRECARIOUS POLITICAL BALANCE. ALL SIDES AGREE THAT THE TALKS WILL BE COMPLEX AND PROLONGED. THE SIGNIFICANT POINT, HOWEVER, IS THAT EACH PARTY BELIEVES THAT A BASIS EXISTS FOR AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT. WHILE NOTHING CONCRETE HAS EMERGED, ALL OF THE PARTIES STRESSED THE "GOOD WILL" THAT PREVAILED DURING THE FIRST NEGOTIATING ROUND.

2. THIS WEEK WILL BE DEVOTED TO A MORE DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE SPECIFIC ISSUES (PUBLIC ORDER, THE ECONOMY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND EDUCATION) BY THE RESPECTIVE PARTY EXPERTS. THIS COURSE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE DC'S STRATEGY OF DEFERRING DISCUSSION OF THE "POLITICAL PROBLEM" UNTIL A CLEARER OUTLINE FOR A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING EMERGES. IT ALSO RECOGNIZES THE NEED OF THE MAJOR PARTIES (DC, PCI, PSI) -- ALL ON A SHORT LEASH -- TO REPORT BACK TO THEIR DIRECTORATES. THE PCI MEETS TODAY (MAY 9); THE PSI ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, AND THERE IS TALK OF A DC DIRECTORATE MEETING THIS WEEK AS WELL. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EVENT OF THE WEEK IS THURSDAY'S PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AT WHICH THE PARTY'S CONFIDENTIAL

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IMMEDIATE AIMS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE DEFINED. THE SESSION MAY ALSO PROVIDE THE OCCASION FOR PRESENTATION OF THE PCI'S MUCH DISCUSSED AND LONG-DELAYED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN.

3. THE TWO PRINCIPLE PROTAGONISTS, THE DC AND THE PCI, CURIOUSLY ANALYZE THE SITUATION IN SIMILAR TERMS. WRITING IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE DC'S WEEKLY, DISCUSSIONE, DC PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI STATES THAT THE BILATERAL MEETINGS ARE THE OUTGROWTH OF "THE ABNORMAL RESULTS OF THE JUNE 20" ELECTIONS. IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRACTICAL MAJORITY, THE DC MUST FIND A NEW WAY TO "CONFRONT AND RESOLVE SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST URGENT PROBLEMS." HE REMINDED HIS PARTY (PERHAPS IN REPLY TO LAST WEEK'S

STERN WARNING AGAINST A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD IN THE CHURCH ORGAN, AVVENIRE) THAT "AN ERA HAS FINISHED," AND THAT THE DC MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO UNDERTAKE

A REAL "CONFRONTO" WITH THE PCI SINCE IT HAS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE. WRITING IN L'UNITA, PCI SECRETARY PAJETTA FURNISHED A SIMILAR ANALYSIS. IF, AFTER 30 YEARS, THE DC HAS AGREED TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE PCI, THIS IS NOT A MIRACLE BUT RATHER A SIGN THAT SOMETHING HAS CHANGED, THAT AN ERA IS FINISHED, AND THAT A NEW PHASE IS BEGINNING.

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4. IF ZACCAGNINI AND PAJETTA ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE OBJECTIVE REALITY OF THE SITUATION CALLS FOR A NEW APPROACH, THEIR CONCLUSIONS COULD NOT BE MORE DISPARATE. ZACCAGNINI INSISTS THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT LEAD TO A "POLITICAL AGREEMENT," MUCH LESS A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD ON BROAD, LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES. ONLY "EXCESSES OF EXPECTATION AND FEARS," ZACCAGNINI OBSERVES, CAN MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS APPEAR LIKE "A FIRST, UNDERHAND STEP TOWARD THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE." ALTHOUGH CAUTIOUS IN TONE, PAJETTA AFFIRMS THAT THE BILATERAL MEETINGS ARE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT IN THEMSELVES. HE SAID THE DC'S RESERVE PERMITS "A CERTAIN OPTIMISM" THAT A PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED, WHICH, "IF IT IS TO BE CREDIBLE," MUST CONTAIN GUARANTEES OF A CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL FRAME-
WORK.

5. WHILE PAJETTA'S ARTICLE SEEMS INTENDED AT PREPAR-

INT THE PCI'S BASE TO ACCEPT SOMETHING LESS THAN THE
MAXIMALIST DEMANDS (THE INSISTENCE ON THE HISTORIC
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEETINGS), SOCIALIST COMMENTARY
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SEEMS PRIMARIOY DESIGNED TO PRESSURE THE PCI TO KEEP UP
ITS POLITICAL DEMANDS. IN CONTINUING TO INSIST (IN
CRAXI'S WORDS) ON "THE WIDEST POSSIBLE POLITICAL
ACCORD," THE PSI DAILY, AVANTI, FRANKLY RECOGNIZED THAT
ITS POSITION IS "MORE IGID" THAN THE PCI'S. THE
PSI THEREFORE SEES ITS ROLE NOT AS AN INTERMEDIARY BUT
RATHER AS A FORCE FOR PRESSURE. IN THIS REGARD, THE
PSI HAS BEEN JOINED BY THE REPUBLICANS AND, TO A LESSER
EXTEN, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

6. THE PSI'S ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE COHERENTLY IN THE
CURRENT NEGOTIATING ROUND, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY
IMPAIRED BY RENEWED INTERNAL BICKERING. ON MAY 5,
THE UNEASY TRUCE BETWEEN CRAXI AND THE MANCINI FACTION
(WHICH HAD INITIALLY TIPPED CRAXI'S ELECTION)
BROKE DOWN AGAIN WITH THE RESIGNATION OF THREE
"MANCINIANI" FROM THEIR PARTY POSITIONS. ALTHOUGH
THEY OSTENSIBLY OBJECTED TO THE "EXTREMIST" POSITIONS
THE PSI HAD TAKEN UNDER CRAXI, THEIR ARGUMENT
APPEARS TO BE NOT SO MUCH WITH CRAXI AS WITH THE
PSI'S LEFT-WING. THE MATTER CAME TO A HEAD AT LAST
WEEK'S PSI YOUTH CONGRESS AT BOLOGNA AT WHICH MANCINI'S
NAME WAS JEERED DOWN AND THE LEFT-WING MADE A
VIRTUALLY CLEAN SWEEP OF THE DIRECTORATE. THE SCENE
REPEATED ITSELF AT THIS WEEKEND'S PSI WORKERS CONFERENCE
IN TURING AT WHICH MANCA PRESIDED (CALLING FOR A FIRMER
SPLIT WITH THE DC) AND WHERE MANCINIANI WERE AGAIN
MERCILESSLY WHISTLED DOWN. WITH SOME MANCINI FOLLOWERS
CALLING FOR SPECIAL CONGRESS TO CLARIFY THE PARTY'S
POLICY ("WE ARE BOUNCED BETWEEN OPPOSITON AND
ACQUIESCENCE TO A DC-PCI ACCORD"). CRAXI WILL HAV E HIS
HANDS FULL IN BRIDGING HIS PRTY'S DEEP, FACTIONAL
DIVISIONS AT THIS WEEK'S DIRECTORATE MEETING.
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